

Executive Registry

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OCA FILE WJHMEMORANDUM FOR THE HEADS OF EXECUTIVE BRANCH DEPARTMENTS
AND AGENCIES

SUBJECT: Communications with Overseas Missions

Executive Branch departments and agencies are reminded that in accordance with the President's letter of instruction to Ambassadors (the most recent of which was transmitted on December 17, 1986, and is attached), all official non-intelligence communications with our overseas missions submitting official reports, identifying significant operational actions, or transmitting instructions must be sent through official State Department channels. This procedure will ensure the effective coordination of all United States Government activity in accordance with the President's determination that Chiefs of Mission receive policy guidance only from the Secretary of State or from the President directly.

Chiefs of Mission are instructed to refer to the Department of State for approval any official communications they receive that have not passed through official State Department channels.

I count on each of you to ensure that your staffs comply with this guidance. Compliance is particularly important in view of the possibilities of direct access to overseas missions which new computer-to-computer links give each Executive department and agency.



Colin L. Powell..

Attachment: Presidential Letter to Ambassadors,
transmitted December 17, 1986.

DISTRIBUTION:

See Attached

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The Secretary of State
The Secretary of the Treasury
The Secretary of Defense
The Attorney General
The Secretary of the Interior
The Secretary of Agriculture
The Secretary of Commerce
The Secretary of Labor
The Secretary of Health and Human Services
The Secretary of Housing and Urban Development
The Secretary of Transportation
The Secretary of Energy
The Secretary of Education
The Director, Office of Management and Budget
The Director of Central Intelligence
United States Representative to the United Nations
United States Trade Representative
Chairman, Council of Economic Advisors
Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff
Chairman, Nuclear Regulatory Commission
Administrator, Agency for International Development
Director, Arms Control and Disarmament Agency
Administrator, General Services Administration
Director, United States Information Agency
Administrator, National Aeronautics and Space Administration
Director of ACTION
Administrator of Veterans Affairs
Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency
Director, Federal Bureau of Investigation
Administrator, Drug Enforcement Administration
Director, Federal Emergency Management Agency
Director, National Science Foundation

Instructions to Ambassadors on Chain of Command

Dear Mr. Ambassador:

I want to extend to you my personal best wishes for the success of your mission in [country]. As my personal representative there, you, along with the Secretary of State, share with me the responsibility for the conduct of our relations with [country]. I know we share a mutual conviction that carrying the American message of hope and freedom and advancing United States' interests abroad reinforces the foundations of peace. Together we are pledged to work for national strength and economic growth and to promote the values undergirding our Nation's unity and security.

I give you my full personal support as Chief of the United States Mission in [country] in the exercise of your strong statutory mandate under section 207 of the Foreign Service Act of 1980 (22 U.S.C. 3927). I charge you to exercise full responsibility for the direction, coordination, and supervision of all United States Government officers and employees in the country or organization to which you are accredited, except for personnel under the command of a United States area military commander, personnel under the authority of the Chief of another United States Mission (for example, one accredited to an international organization), or personnel detailed to duty on the staff of an international organization. I expect you to oversee the operation of all United States Government programs and activities within that responsibility. I have notified all heads of departments and agencies accordingly and have instructed them to inform their personnel in the United States and abroad.

So that you can ensure effective coordination of all United States Government activities within your responsibility, I ask you to provide strong program direction and leadership of operations Missionwide. Please instruct all personnel under your charge: It is their duty to keep you fully informed at all times about their activities so you can effectively direct, coordinate, and supervise United States programs and operations under your jurisdiction and recommend policies to Washington.

You will receive policy guidance and instructions from the Secretary of State, who is my principal foreign policy spokesman and adviser, or from me directly. I expect you to report with directness and candor. I want to emphasize that the Secretary of State has the responsibility not only for the activities of the Department of State and the Foreign Service but also, to the fullest extent provided by law, for the overall policy direction, coordination, and supervision of the United States Government activities overseas. There may be developments or decisions on which personnel under your authority disagree. The Secretary of State and I will always welcome the opportunity to consider your recommendations for alternative courses of action and policy proposals.

As you assume your duties, I know that you will do so with a strong commitment to impartial and equitable treatment of all U.S. Government personnel under your jurisdiction. Should any perceived inequities be amenable to elimination or mitigation by appeal to or negotiation with the host government, I urge you to pursue this course in a manner consistent with your authority and with international law and established customary practice. Recognizing that various agencies operate under different legislation and regulations, should you consider legislative or executive policy changes to be desirable in this connection, you should recommend such changes through the Secretary of State. Additionally, fair treatment of all U.S. Government personnel regardless of race, color, creed, sex, or national origin epitomizes our belief in the adherence to the principles of equality of opportunity, a value and concept that form an important element of the American democratic tradition.

As Commander-in-Chief, I have authority over United States military forces. On my behalf you have responsibility for the direction, coordination, supervision, and safety, including security from terrorism, of all Defense Department personnel in [country] except those forces under the operational command and control of a United States area military commander and personnel detailed to international organizations. Defense Attache offices, units engaged in security assistance, and other DOD components attached to your Mission, as well as other Defense Department activities which may have an impact upon the conduct of our diplomatic relations with [country] fall within your responsibility.

It is imperative that you maintain close relations with concerned United States military commanders and Chiefs of Mission accredited to international organizations. A copy of this letter is being disseminated to them.

You must keep each other currently informed and cooperate on all matters of mutual interest. Any differences which cannot be resolved in the field should be reported by you to the Secretary of State; unified commanders should report to the Secretary of Defense.

I expect the highest standards of professional and personal conduct from all United States Government personnel abroad. You have the authority and my full support to take any action required to ensure the maintenance of such standards.

Your mission is to protect and advance the United States' interests abroad, and you will receive the resources necessary to accomplish that mission. At the same time, I expect that these resources will be used in an effective and efficient manner, and that they will be directly and carefully related to priority policy and program activities. You should inform the Secretary of State when you believe that staffing of any agency is either inadequate or excessive to the performance of essential functions.

I am confident that you will represent the United States with imagination, energy, and skill. You have my full personal confidence and best wishes.

Sincerely,

RONALD REAGAN ■